

1 1. A method comprising:  
2 operating a managed network of consumer-use  
3 processor-based devices; and  
4 assigning distributed computing tasks to said  
5 processor-based devices.

1 2. The method of claim 1 including establishing a  
2 persistent connection between at least one of said devices  
3 and a server.

1 3. The method of claim 1 including subdividing a  
2 distributed computing job into tasks and assigning each of  
3 said tasks to a different device.

1 4. The method of claim 3 including logging each task  
2 and the assigned device.

1 5. The method of claim 4 including developing an  
2 estimate of the time to task completion.

1 6. The method of claim 5 including, if no results  
2 are received after the passage of said time estimate,  
3 querying said device.

1        7.    The method of claim 5 including automatically  
2 requesting said results after the passage of said time  
3 estimate.

1        8.    The method of claim 1 including maintaining, from  
2 a server, the software on said device.

1        9.    The method of claim 1 including receiving the  
2 results of said task from a device and providing an  
3 acknowledgement to said device when the results are  
4 received correctly.

1        10.   The method of claim 1 including receiving a  
2 completion message from a device and automatically  
3 establishing an upload session to receive the task results.

1        11.   An article comprising a medium storing  
2 instructions that enable a processor-based system to:  
3                operate a managed network of consumer-use  
4 processor-based devices; and  
5                assign distributed computing tasks to said  
6 processor-based devices.

1        12.   The article of claim 11 further storing  
2 instructions that enable the processor-based system to

3 establish a persistent connection between at least one of  
4 said devices and said system.

1 13. The article of claim 11 further storing  
2 instructions that enable the processor-based system to  
3 subdivide a distributed computing job into tasks and assign  
4 each of said tasks to a different device.

1 14. The article of claim 13 further storing  
2 instructions that enable the processor-based system to log  
3 each task and the assigned device.

1 15. The article of claim 14 further storing  
2 instructions that enable the processor-based system to  
3 develop an estimate of the time to task completion.

1 16. The article of claim 15 further storing  
2 instructions that enable the processor-based system to  
3 query a device if no results are received after the passage  
4 of said time estimate.

1 17. The article of claim 15 further storing  
2 instructions that enable the processor-based system to  
3 automatically request said results after the passage of  
4 said time estimate.

1        18. The article of claim 11 further storing  
2 instructions that enable the processor-based system to  
3 maintain the software on a device.

1        19. The article of claim 11 further storing  
2 instructions that enable the processor-based system to  
3 receive the results of a task from a device and provide an  
4 acknowledgement to said device when the results are  
5 received correctly.

1        20. The article of claim 11 further storing  
2 instructions that enable the processor-based system to  
3 receive a completion message from a device and  
4 automatically establish an upload session to receive the  
5 task results.

1        21. A system comprising:  
2            a processor-based device; and  
3            a storage coupled to said processor-based device  
4 storing instructions that enable said device to operate a  
5 managed network of consumer-use processor-based clients and  
6 assign distributed computing tasks to said processor-based  
7 clients.

1        22. The system of claim 21 wherein said system is a  
2 server.

1        23. The system of claim 22 wherein said server is a  
2 system management server.

1        24. The system of claim 21 wherein said processor-  
2 based device has a persistent connection with at least one  
3 consumer-use processor-based client.

1        25. The system of claim 21 wherein said storage  
2 stores instructions that enable said processor-based device  
3 to divide a distributed computing job into a plurality of  
4 tasks, assign said tasks to specific processor-based  
5 clients, and estimate the time to complete said job by said  
6 clients.

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